

Dear Friend of SFF:

In my very first PSYCHOGRAM some six months ago, I said:

"One of the men who has figured most prominently in the development of SPIRITUAL FRONTIERS FELLOWSHIP is Arthur Ford.

"His special capabilities and contributions have added immeasurably to the influence of the SFF movement. Through his psychic work, lectures, personal connections and selfless service he not only kept the program excitingly up-to-date, but has insisted it go forward into ever greater contemporary meaning.

Though Arthur's passing had been foretold by his control "Fletcher" in a psychic session which had been taped in mid-December (1970) and in which the message was that "Ford will not be with you shortly after the first of the year," (1971), his passing on the morning of January 4 at 1:30 a.m., in Miami, had the aspect of suddenness and shock to all who knew or had heard of "America's leading psychic."

I have a hunch that had I told him when he used to talk to me about death and dying that a PSYCHOGRAM of this kind could conceivably appear, he would with characteristic enigmatical smile, have said, "That's okay with me. I'll read it."

Many of us who loved him, who understood him and who miss him, believe he will.

Cordially,



Marcus Bach

SPIRITUAL FRONTIERS FELLOWSHIP

1.

Dear Arthur:

Now that you are there, what do you have to tell us that you could not tell us while you were here?

While you were here, bound by physicality, limited by self-consciousness, tormented as you often were by the ebb and flow of psychic power, you once said,

"We never know all about these things until we get there (into the after life) and we may not even know all about them then."

So what do you have to tell us?

What is Fletcher really like? What were his first words to you and yours to him? In what etheric shadow or flash of dawn did you meet, and in that timeless hour what was the strongest tie you felt with him: love, fulfillment, a spirit-oneness, or simply the thrill of an adventure in which he had joined with you for so many years seeking to prove the interlocking lure of life?

I am wondering if you said to him, "I'd like to live this whole thing over again, knowing what I know now?" Or did you say, "Dammit, Fletcher, I am glad it's done. Finished. Find me a quiet spot. I need some rest."

Speaking of rest, I remember one night after a lecture in New York, at Riverside Church. You were tired and it was snowing and we were cold. We went to a restaurant and while you stirred your coffee you asked me to repeat some lines from a poem I had used in my remarks that night. Go Down Death.

You scrounged in the corner of the booth with a far-away look in your eyes as if it really didn't matter whether anybody said anything. But with an affection for James Weldon Johnson and his famous lines about the death of Sister Caroline, I said,

"And Death took her up like a baby,
And she lay in his icy arms,
But she didn't feel no chill.

"And Death began to ride ---
Up beyond the evening star,
Out beyond the morning star,
Into the glittering light of glory,
On to the Great White Throne.
And there he laid Sister Caroline
On the loving breast of Jesus.

"And Jesus took his own hand
And wiped away her tears,
And he smoothed the furrows from her face,
And the angels sang a little song,
And Jesus rocked her in his arms
And kept a-saying, Take your rest,
Take your rest, take your rest.

"Weep not -- weep not,
She is not dead;
She's resting in the bosom of Jesus."

You listened in a dreamy way and said, "That's okay.
That's real good."

For a moment a kind of softness and loneliness came over you. You never were, at least I never felt you were, a sentimental "Jesus man." You were convinced he had been mishandled and commercialized and exploited by too many preachers and evangelists.

You were the last to let anyone see or know how you really felt about him.

No, I take that back. You made it clear in your books that,

"The ministry of Jesus was the
sublimest mediumship in history."

You speculated about who his control might have been -- Abraham, Moses, Elias -- and concluded it was Cosmic Being, the Holy Spirit itself.

You did not make any friends among the fundamentalist clergy by those statements, as you well know. And you were misunderstood by many liberal ministers and priests as well. And you know that.

Actually, you were not particularly interested in making friends. You were more interested in finding them or in having them find you.

Was that the reason for your deep sense of loneliness?

Those few who got beyond your often bold, defiant, stubborn, outspoken and sometimes rough exterior, found the psychic who in his solitude and quiet often agonized about the total struggle of life, its seeming contradictions, its insurmountable demands, its mad milieu within both society and self.

2.

How much of all this is cleared up now that you are no longer here, but there?

As sensitives go, you were in the opinion of many of us the best in our time. In my own experience I never found anyone whose demonstrations were more evidential, who, when conditions were right and you were right, pulled back the veil more boldly and convincingly than you.

If Fletcher wants to know how effective you were or how effective he was through you, tell him to listen to some of the tapes we made in psychic sessions in my home.

But, then, he knows all that....knows of the time that a message came through from a man who, Fletcher said, was bringing my wife handfuls of paper-shell pecans, which brought back the half-forgotten remembrance of her father, who died when she was very young, and who used to bring her paper-shell pecans.

The time Fletcher identified the circumstances of the death of a friend of mine who had died mysteriously in Canada.....

the time he cleared up an equally unsolved death of a missionary in Africa.....

the time a man who had died suddenly in Iowa City asked that

love and greetings be given to his wife who was still alive. I asked, "What is your wife's name?" and Fletcher said, "I see water...I see hot water....I see geysers.... wait a moment....her name is Therma."

Later when you listened to this on the tape you said, "That's the way messages come, in symbols, impressions, rather than in words. That is why when mediums sometimes struggle for an identification, they may not be fishing, but trying to interpret the symbol."

But, you know, Art, even the best "mediums" have never been able to convince the world that the dead actually live and that the veil is really not a veil but a shadow and the shadow merely an illusion.

This is the mystery we sometimes talked about: why would man rather doubt than believe?

We talked about it but never finalized anything. The question remains. You once said,

"People live as if they lived to die, and
not as if they lived to live again."

You had a good point there. All this talk about life after death and all this emotion about the glory of the life-to-come, but how few live as if it were for real!

And once we talked about the world's reluctance to believe in communication with the dead, and wondered why there is such great resistance to believing that.

Is it because of the fraud and self-deception frequently exposed in spiritualistic demonstrations? Is it because of our distorted sense of values, our perverted goals, our deep-rooted unconscious enmity against the unknown?

Once Fletcher said,

"Only those know God who feel they don't
know Him."

I took this to mean that His infinity is so beyond our finiteness that those who are so sure they know Him must surely have made Him within the limits of their image. He is always greater than that, isn't He?

And how do you feel about that now?

3.

While you are reminiscing with Fletcher will you, I wonder, ask him what happened in Haiti? I have a hunch you will.

After all, here we were in the Magic Isle for the express purpose of contacting the spirit of Stanley Reser, the white Voodoo priest who had suddenly and mysteriously died.

You lay on the bed on which he had lain in the little cottage near Croix-des-Bouquets. If ever a setting was right for a psychic session, this was it. The vibrations were good, the prayers we said were sincere, and it goes without saying that Reser's life had been closely bound with the loa, the spirits of the departed, the overpowering psyches of the Voodoo gods.

My point is, as you know, nothing came through. I was never in a psychic session with you when less happened. Even during the following days, and at the ceremony of ti-bon-ange when the soul is supposed to leave the earth, nothing happened, nor at the fire ceremony when the initiate thrust his hands and arms into boiling oil without being burned, you were unable to make any contact through Fletcher, or Fletcher through you.

My point is, what happened in Haiti?

What deploys spirit communication?

What fouls up the clear channel?

Was it you?

Is it we?

Is there "static" on the other side?

Does a control have his good days and his bad days as all of us mortals do?

Is it negativism or doubt among the circle of sitters?

Does self-consciousness block the passage?

Is it lack of faith, lack of harmony, lack of honest intent?

Is it something atmospheric, electronic, cybernetic?

If we could clear this up it might help us in our total relationship with life and life-to-come and might even make our prayer life and our understanding of God more effective. For to be aware of something unknown or something not fully known is surely a trigger to frustration.

But, again, it is also the resounding heart of faith!

I need not remind you that many of us surely do not need the proof of spirit communication to believe that the dead live. Seeing may be believing, but feeling is knowing, and I know I have the feeling! Every great religion believes in some form of life-after-death. None more convincingly than Christianity. The central core of the Christian faith is Christ, and the greatest proof history has of a resurrection is the record of the Third Day.

4.

Actually, Art, the end of the mystery is fantastically intriguing. It is this, and it can be said of all who have died:

Though you are there, you are also still here.

And that has always been the wonder of life's continuum.

There will be talk about you for a long time, pro and con. Pro and con about who and what you really were and what your place will be in the unfolding, onward-going history of psychic research.

Books and articles will be written about you, pro and con. No one better than you realized how controversial you were, which is what comes of being a celebrity in any field and of honestly reporting, as you so often did, on both your weaknesses and strength. Who among us has the courage to live behind open windows rather than to hide behind neatly closed doors?

Pro and con about the Houdini incident, the Sun Myung Moon sessions, the Bishop Pike report.

Pro and con, even down to your insightful statement that,

"Everyone, whether good or bad, lowly or exalted, smart or stupid, will continue after biological death to live as a personal entity capable of independent thought and action and endowed with memory -- this is a psychic fact."

"And everyone, whatever his level of psychic insight, must, if he is to realize his true potential as a person, labor to rise from envy, greed, fear, pride, resentment, and the other destructive emotions toward love, understanding, compassion, and the other harmonious emotions -- this is spiritual growth."

Someone once said, "To love someone is to see the miracle invisible to others." That is how it was with you, Arthur, both ways -- in your relationship with us and our relationship with you.

This, fully as much as the important role you played in the psychic field, was your true greatness, your contribution to us, and the living memory we hold whenever we think of you. You gave so much of yourself, selflessly, totally, that the invisible world has become a bit more clear and universal love a bit more real when viewed in its infinitude between two worlds which, as you sought to prove, are truly one.

We loved you. We miss you and we know that all is well.

My best,



Marc

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SPIRITUAL FRONTIERS FELLOWSHIP is an interfaith, non-profit religious corporation formed in 1956 "to sponsor, explore and interpret the growing interest in psychic phenomena and mystical experience within the historic church and wherever these experiences relate to effective prayer, spiritual healing, personal survival, and man's relationship with himself, his fellowman and God." You may receive information about the work and service of SFF by writing to: Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship, 800 Custer Avenue, Suite 1, Evanston, Illinois 60202, (312) 864-6533.